

# State Route 85 at Gila Bend

Location Design Concept Report and Environmental Assessment

## Notes

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## Welcome

Welcome to the public meeting for the proposed improvements to State Route (SR) 85 from Watermelon Road to Interstate 8 (I-8). There will be a short presentation to summarize the project background and to describe the preliminary alternatives. Following a brief question-and-answer session, Project Team members will be available to answer any specific questions.

We appreciate your attendance tonight and value your input. Please fill out the comment sheet and leave it with us, or send your comments back to the Project Team by February 22, 2006. (See “Your Input” section on page 7 for contact information.)

## Introduction

SR 85 and Business Route 8 (B-8) connect Interstate 10 (I-10) in Buckeye to I-8 in Gila Bend. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) studied this 37-mile corridor throughout the 1990s, and the study culminated in 2002 with an approved Design Concept Report (DCR) and Environmental Assessment (EA). This corridor is part of the National Highway System and is a designated section of the Canada-America-Mexico (CANAMEX) Trade Corridor. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ADOT have been evaluating options for the extension of SR 85 from Watermelon Road to I-8 in Gila Bend.

This project process consists of two phases. Phase I was a corridor location study that included engineering and environmental analyses. Phase II consists of the development and evaluation of preliminary alternatives. This second phase will result in the publication of a Location Design Concept Report (LDCR) and EA.

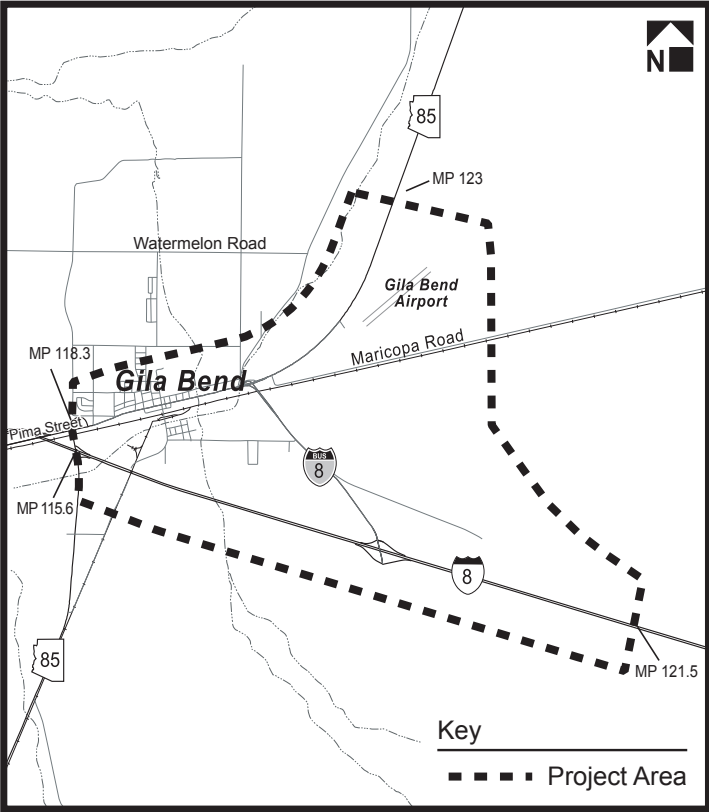
## Phase I—Corridor Location Report

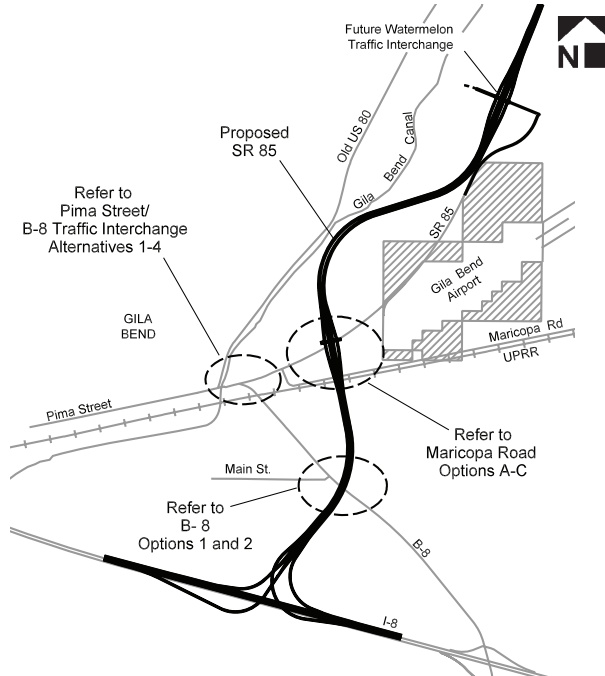
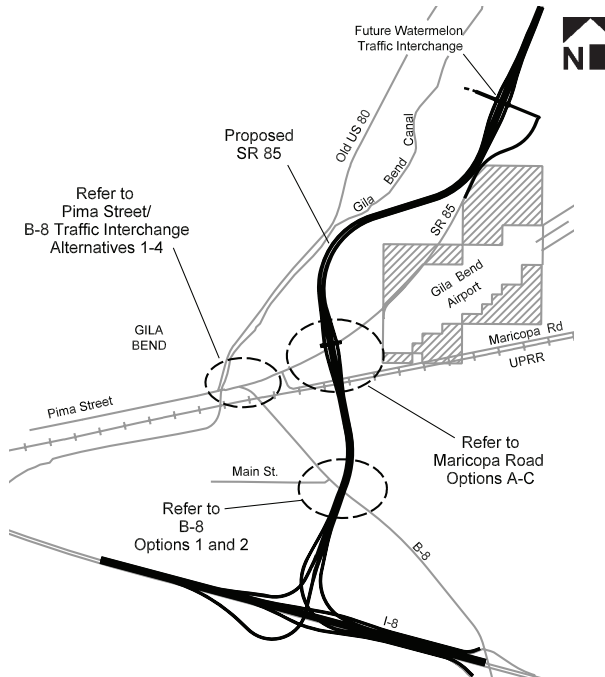
In Phase I the Project Team developed six corridor alternatives for evaluation. In addition, the Project Team also reconsidered the Preferred 2002 DCR corridor concept and the No Action Alternative. The corridor alternatives were presented at a public information meeting held on December 16, 2004, in Gila Bend. Participant comments received at the public meeting and input from the Town of Gila Bend, Maricopa County, and Arizona State Land Department representatives favored the Blue Corridor–East Option. The resulting corridor location report recommended it to be carried into Phase II for more detailed study. The No Action Alternative has also been carried into Phase II.

## Phase II—Location Design Concept Report/Environmental Assessment

The Project Team is developing and evaluating preliminary alternatives. The preparation of various environmental studies for the EA has also begun. The EA is being prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FHWA's regulations and guidelines.

On the following pages, a description of the preliminary alternatives and options are provided, including two refined alignments for SR 85 (mainline), three separate options for the SR 85 traffic interchange at Maricopa Road, and four options for the intersection of Pima Street and B-8. In addition, there are two options for the grade separation between B-8 and the proposed SR 85 mainline.



Mainline (SR 85) Alternative 1		<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four-lane access-controlled divided highway.</li> <li>Grade-separated interchanges at Watermelon Road, Maricopa Road, and I-8.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intersects with I-8 approximately 7,800 feet from the existing B-8 traffic interchange with I-8.</li> <li>Approximately 206 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>Impact to 11 buildings (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>Provides increased capacity for projected regional traffic volumes.</li> <li>Relative 2006 Cost = \$53,000,000</li> </ul>
Mainline (SR 85) Alternative 2		<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four-lane access-controlled divided highway.</li> <li>Grade-separated interchanges at Watermelon Road, Maricopa Road, and I-8.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intersects with I-8 approximately 6,200 feet from the existing B-8 traffic interchange with I-8.</li> <li>Requires braided ramps because of short distance between traffic interchanges along I-8 (B-8/I-8 and Proposed SR 85/I-8).</li> <li>Approximately 281 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>Impact to 4 buildings (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>Provides increased capacity for projected regional traffic volumes.</li> <li>Requires a more complex roadway signage system.</li> <li>Relative 2006 Cost = \$58,000,000</li> </ul>
No Action		<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No improvements, other than routine maintenance activities, would be completed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional capacity provided for projected regional traffic volumes.</li> <li>Projected traffic volumes may cause congested traffic movements through the Town of Gila Bend.</li> </ul>

### Next Steps

The Project Team will use information gathered tonight from the public and from local, state, and federal agencies to evaluate the preliminary alternatives. The alternative evaluation will be summarized in the Draft EA and will aid in the development of a preferred alternative. The Draft EA will provide an evaluation of the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the project proposed by ADOT. A public hearing on the Draft EA is scheduled for fall 2006.

### Project Team

ADOT and consultant representatives are available tonight to discuss the project and to answer your questions. Representatives are wearing nametags so you can easily identify them. Representatives from ADOT are Paul Patané, Yuma District Engineer; Clark Clatanoff, Project Manager; and William Knight, Environmental Planner. Steve Thomas and Ken Davis are the representatives from FHWA. Assisting ADOT with engineering efforts are Tricia Brown, Project Manager, and Ben Markert, Project Engineer with AMEC. Diane Simpson-Colebank and Patricia McCabe, with Logan Simpson Design Inc., are available to discuss the environmental considerations.

### Your Input

We would like to obtain your input on the alternatives presented tonight. Please take the time to write your comments on the comment sheet and to speak with one of the Project Team members. You may leave your comments with us tonight or send them to us by February 22, 2006. Please submit your comments to the following project representative:

Patricia McCabe  
Environmental Planner  
Logan Simpson Design Inc.  
51 West Third Street, Suite 450  
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### Project Contacts

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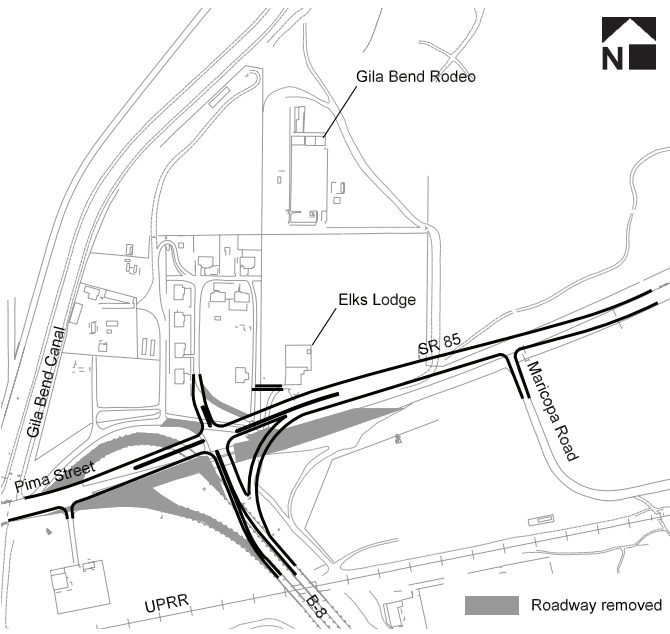
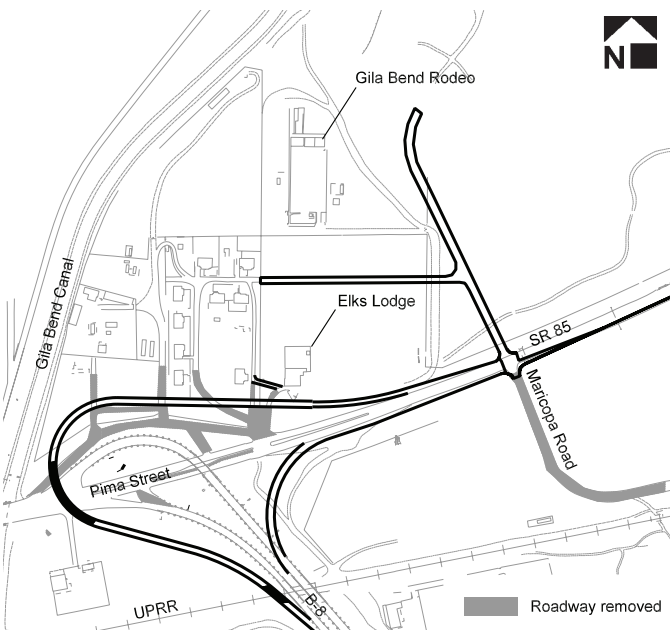
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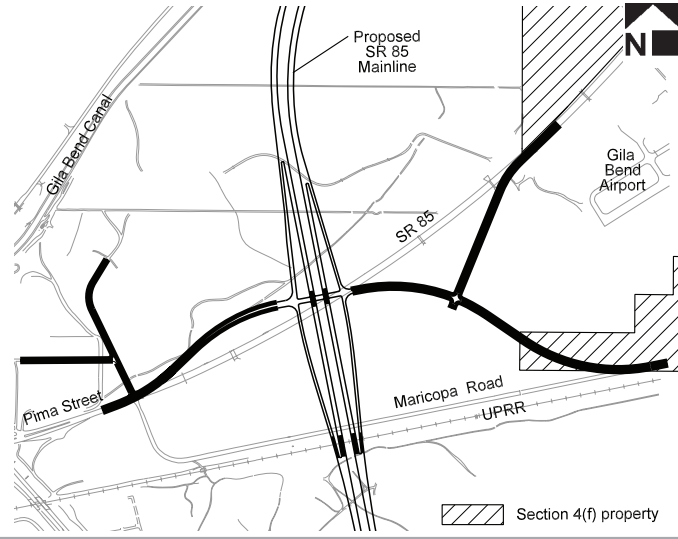
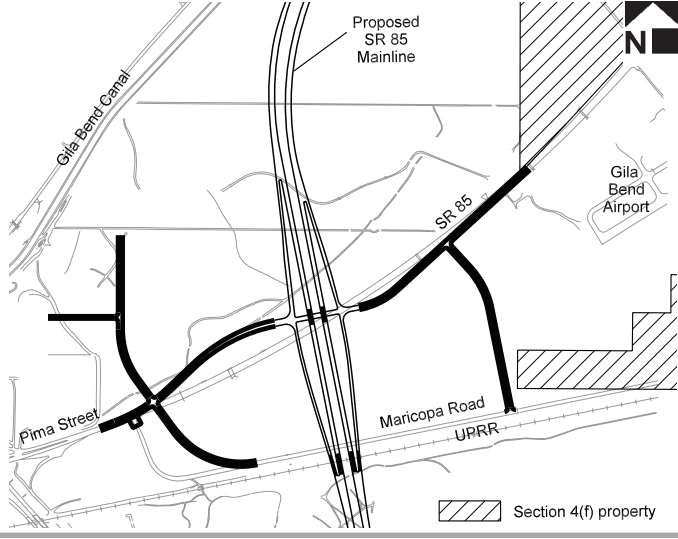
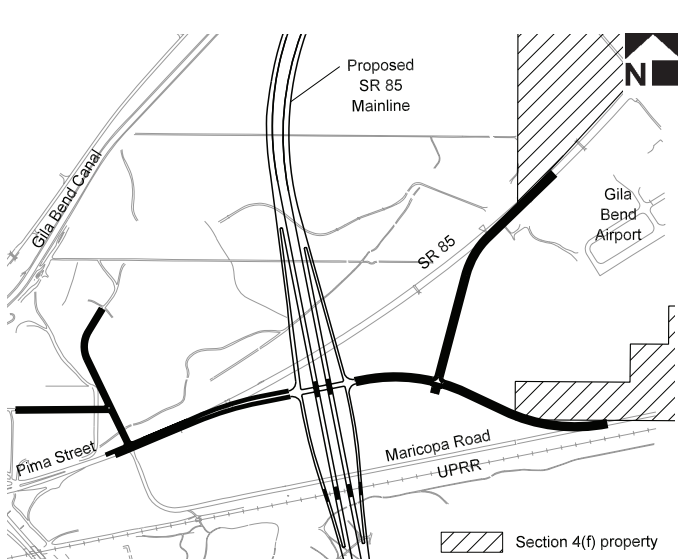
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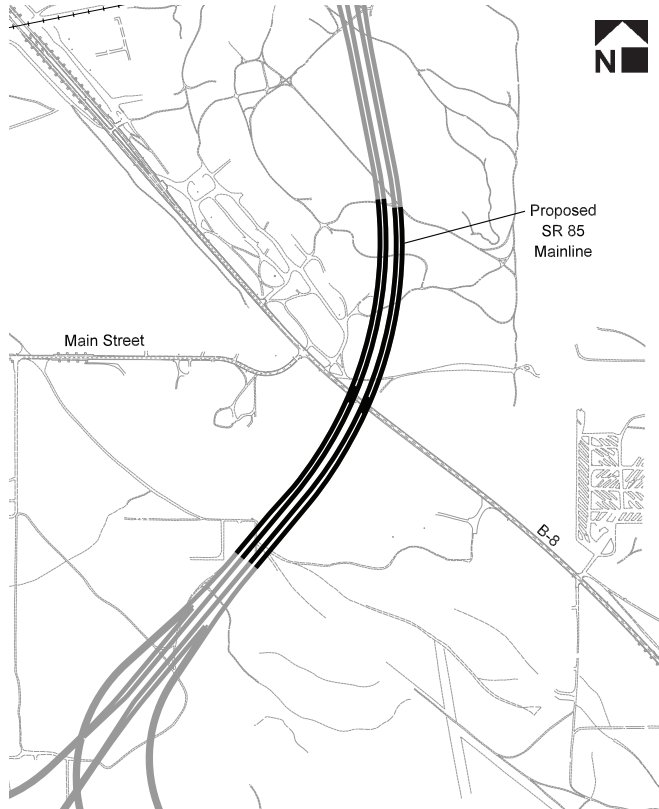
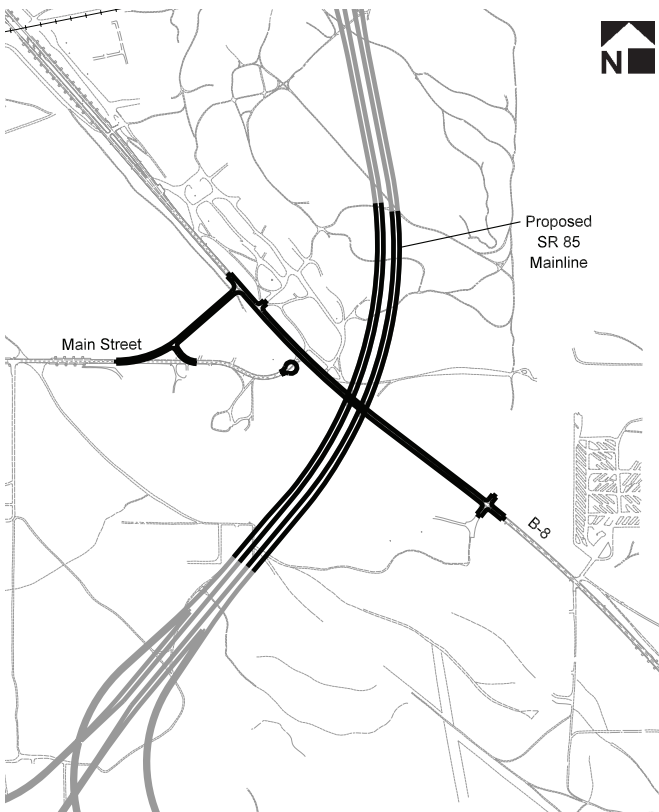
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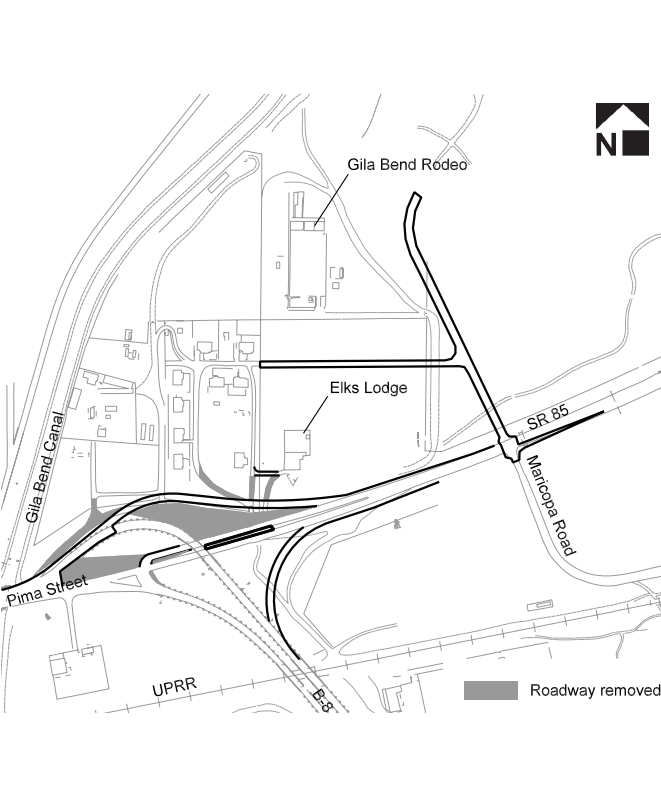
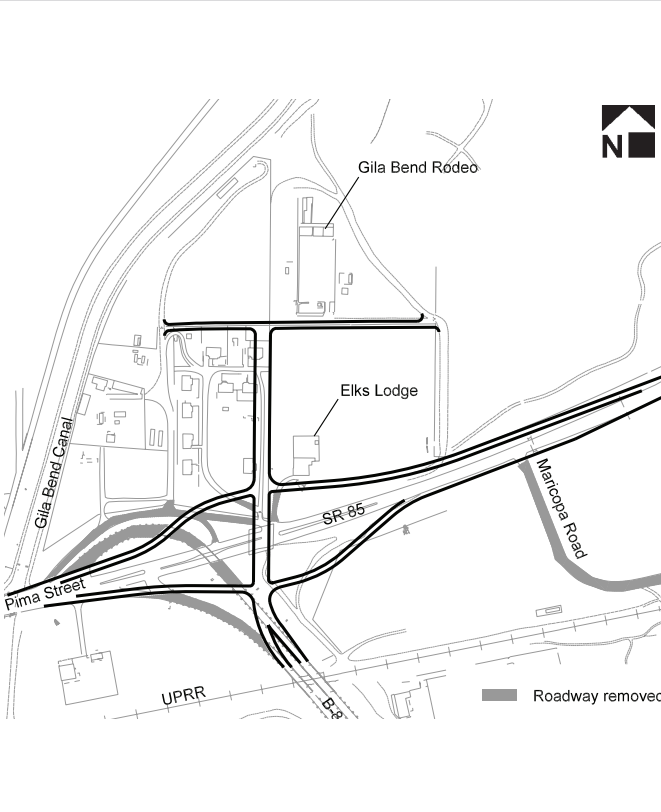
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Pima Street/B-8 Traffic Interchange Alternative 3	 <p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New at-grade traffic intersection.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One new traffic signal.</li> <li>• Provides free-flow westbound B-8 to northbound SR 85.</li> <li>• Approximately 2.7 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>• No impacts to buildings (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>• Three access points would be combined into one location.</li> <li>• Access to the Elks Lodge and the Gila Bend Rodeo north of SR 85 would be relocated.</li> <li>• Relative 2006 Cost = \$3,000,000</li> </ul>
Pima Street/B-8 Traffic Interchange Alternative 4	 <p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remains grade separated for B-8 over Pima Street.</li> <li>• New grade separated structures for southbound SR 85 to eastbound B-8.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free flow westbound B-8 to northbound SR 85.</li> <li>• Approximately 4.2 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>• No impacts to buildings (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>• Three access points would be combined into one location.</li> <li>• Access to the Elks Lodge and the Gila Bend Rodeo north of SR 85 would be relocated.</li> <li>• Relative 2006 Cost = \$8,000,000</li> </ul>
No Action	<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No improvements, other than routine maintenance activities, would be completed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No impacts to buildings (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>• Access to the Elks Lodge and the Gila Bend Rodeo would not be relocated.</li> <li>• Potential impact to local traffic due to projected increases in traffic volumes in the Town of Gila Bend.</li> </ul>

Maricopa Road Option A	 <p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maricopa Road realigns and would connect directly to the proposed SR 85 traffic interchange.</li> <li>• Existing Maricopa Road alignment would terminate at proposed SR 85 mainline.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maricopa Road traffic would free flow coming into Gila Bend.</li> <li>• Requires approximately 1.84 acres of Section 4(f) lands (approximately 0.5 percent of the entire Section 4(f) property).</li> <li>• Approximately 79 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>• Relative 2006 Cost = \$39,000,000</li> </ul>
Maricopa Road Option B	 <p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maricopa Road would remain on the existing alignment and travel under the proposed SR 85 mainline.</li> <li>• Pima Street would be realigned to connect directly to the proposed SR 85 traffic interchange.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maricopa Road does not have direct access to proposed SR 85 traffic interchange.</li> <li>• Requires no use of Section 4(f) lands.</li> <li>• Approximately 66 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>• Relative 2006 Cost = \$42,000,000</li> </ul>
Maricopa Road Option C	 <p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maricopa Road realigns and would connect directly to the proposed SR 85 traffic interchange.</li> <li>• Existing Maricopa Road alignment would terminate at proposed SR 85 mainline.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maricopa Road traffic interchange would be elevated higher than Maricopa Road Options A and B.</li> <li>• Maricopa Road traffic would free flow coming into Gila Bend.</li> <li>• Requires approximately 0.76 acres of Section 4(f) lands (approximately 0.24 percent of the entire Section 4(f) property).</li> <li>• Approximately 73 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>• Relative 2006 Cost = \$41,000,000</li> </ul>

B-8 Option 1		<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade separation of proposed SR 85 mainline over the existing B-8.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 29 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>Impact to 1 building (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>No impact to existing access of adjacent properties.</li> <li>Relative 2006 Cost = \$19,000,000</li> </ul>
B-8 Option 2		<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade separation of existing B-8 over the proposed SR 85 mainline.</li> <li>Main Street intersection with B-8 would be relocated to the north.</li> <li>Reconstruction of 3,000 feet of B-8 would be required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 32 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>Impact to 1 building (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>Access to 3 properties would be reconstructed.</li> <li>Provides a flatter profile for SR 85 mainline.</li> <li>Relative 2006 Cost = \$17,000,000</li> </ul>

Pima Street/B-8 Traffic Interchange Alternative 1		<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remains grade separated for B-8 over Pima Street.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pima Street provides two through lanes into Gila Bend.</li> <li>B-8 westbound traffic free flows to both northbound or southbound Pima Street.</li> <li>Southbound traffic on Pima Street to B-8 left-turn would initially require stop control and possible signal control in the future.</li> <li>Approximately 4.8 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>No impacts to buildings (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>Three access points would be combined into one location.</li> <li>Access to the Elks Lodge and the Gila Bend Rodeo north of SR 85 would be relocated.</li> <li>Relative 2006 Cost = \$3,000,000</li> </ul>
Pima Street/B-8 Traffic Interchange Alternative 2		<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New grade separated diamond traffic interchange, per 2002 DCR.</li> </ul> <p><b>Distinguishing Features:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close proximity to proposed Maricopa Road traffic interchange would result in reduced weaving distances.</li> <li>Two potential signalized intersections.</li> <li>Approximately 5.1 acres of new right-of-way.</li> <li>Impact to 3 buildings (as identified on 2004 aerial photos).</li> <li>Three access points would be combined into one location.</li> <li>Access to the Elks Lodge and the Gila Bend Rodeo north of SR 85 would be relocated.</li> <li>Relative 2006 Cost = \$9,000,000</li> </ul>